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United Nations

Report of the Disarmament Commission for 2004

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-ninth Session
Supplement No. 42 (A/59/42)

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I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/67 of 8 December 2003, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", which reads as follows:

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Disarmament Commission,[1]

Recalling its resolutions 47/54 A of 9 December 1992, 47/54 G of 8 April 1993, 48/77 A of 16 December 1993, 49/77 A of 15 December 1994, 50/72 D of 12 December 1995, 51/47 B of 10 December 1996, 52/40 B of 9 December 1997, 53/79 A of 4 December 1998, 54/56 A of 1 December 1999, 55/35 C of 20 November 2000, 56/26 A of 29 November 2001 and 57/95 of 22 November 2002,

Considering the role that the Disarmament Commission has been called upon to play and the contribution that it should make in examining and submitting recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament and in the promotion of the implementation of the relevant decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session,

Bearing in mind its decision 52/492 of 8 September 1998,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Disarmament Commission;

2. *Reaffirms* the importance of further enhancing the dialogue and cooperation among the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament;

3. *Also reaffirms* the role of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations on those issues;

4. *Requests* the Disarmament Commission to continue its work in accordance with its mandate, as set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly,[2] and with paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 37/78 H of 9 December 1982, and to that end to make every effort to achieve specific recommendations on the items of its agenda, taking into account the adopted "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission";[3]

5. *Recommends* that the Disarmament Commission consider the following items at its 2004 substantive session:

(a) [To be determined]

(b) [To be determined]

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 42* (A/58/42).
[2] Resolution S-10/2.
[3] A/CN.10/137.

6. *Requests* the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2004, namely from 5 to 23 April, and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit to the Disarmament Commission the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament,[4] together with all the official records of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly relating to disarmament matters, and to render all assistance that the Commission may require for implementing the present resolution;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure full provision to the Disarmament Commission and its subsidiary bodies of interpretation and translation facilities in the official languages and to assign, as a matter of priority, all the necessary resources and services, including verbatim records, to that end;

9. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session the item entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission".

2. The Disarmament Commission held its organizational meeting (A/CN.10/PV.256), on 6 November 2003, during which the Commission considered questions related to the organization of work and substantive agenda items for its 2004 substantive session in accordance with the adopted "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission" (A/CN.10/137) and in the light of General Assembly resolution 58/67. The Commission took up the question of the election of its officers, taking into account the principle of rotation of the chairmanship among the geographic regions. The Commission decided to establish a committee of the whole and working groups to deal with the substantive items. The Commission also decided that its next substantive session would be held from 5 to 23 April 2004.

3. The Disarmament Commission further decided to request the Chairman of the Commission, to undertake, with the assistance of the Bureau, informal consultations as to the substantive agenda items for its 2004 substantive session. In pursuit of this mandate the Chairman held 35 informal consultations with various groups of States and individual delegations preceding the opening of the session. However, no consensus was achieved on agenda items.

II. Organization and work of the 2004 session

4. The Disarmament Commission, met at Headquarters from 5 to 23 April 2004. In the course of its session, the Commission held nine formal and five informal meetings (see A/CN.10/PV.257-266), under the chairmanship of Revaz Adamia (Georgia). Timur Alasaniya, Senior Political Affairs Officer of the Disarmament and Decolonization Affairs Branch, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, served as the Secretary of the Commission.

5. At its 257th meeting, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda for the 2004 substantive session, contained in document A/CN.10/L.55, as follows:

1. Opening of the session.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 27* (A/58/27).

2. Adoption of the agenda.

3. Organization of work.

4. (Nuclear disarmament item to be inserted).

5. (Conventional disarmament item to be inserted).

6. Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

7. Other business.

6. During the session, the Bureau of the Commission was constituted as follows:

Chairman:
Revaz Adamia (Georgia)

Vice-Chairmen:
Representatives of the following Member States: Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Costa Rica, Ireland, Peru, Republic of Korea and Uzbekistan

Rapporteur:
Meir Itschaki (Israel)

7. At its ten formal and five informal meetings the Disarmament Commission, owing to extraordinary circumstances, continued deliberations on possible substantive agenda items for its current substantive session. It was also understood that this did not constitute or create any precedent whatsoever.

8. During these deliberations, various groups of States and individual delegations submitted proposals for substantive agenda items (CRP.3-6; see also attached).

9. Although no general debate was held, the following countries took the floor at plenary meetings in the course of deliberations: Algeria, Argentina (on behalf of MERCOSUR countries, associated countries Bolivia, Chile and Peru, as well as Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Guatemala), Belarus, Burkina Faso, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia (on behalf of NAM), Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), Japan, Morocco, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro (on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States), South Africa, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom, the United States of America and Viet Nam (on behalf of the Group of Asian States).

10. At its 260th meeting, the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, proposed to adjourn the session and reconvene it at a later stage, sometime after the conclusion of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Within this time frame, the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement encouraged the Chairman to continue informal consultations aimed at achieving a consensus on substantive agenda items. With this understanding, the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement agreed to use the Chairman's proposal dated 12 April 2004 as a basis for further discussion. There was no consensus in the Commission on the proposal to adjourn the session.

III. Documentation

A. Documents submitted by the Secretary-General

11. Pursuant to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 58/67, the Secretary-General, by a note dated 9 March 2004, transmitted to the Disarmament Commission the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament, together with all the official records of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly relating to disarmament matters (A/CN.10/202).

B. Other documents, including documents submitted by Member States

12. In the course of the Commission's work, the documents listed below, dealing with agenda items, were submitted:

(a) A conference room paper, submitted by Indonesia on behalf of States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement (A/CN.10/2004/CRP.3);

(b) A conference room paper, submitted by Ireland on behalf of the European Union (A/CN.10/2004/CRP.4);

(c) A conference room paper, submitted by the United States of America (A/CN.10/2004/CRP.5);

(d) A conference room paper, submitted by the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/2004/CRP.6).

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

13. At its 265th meeting, on 23 April, the Commission decided to continue its deliberations on substantive agenda items for the 2005 substantive session and in this connection requested the Chairman to continue, with the assistance of the Bureau, informal consultations and to present the outcome of those consultations to the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission in November-December 2004.

14. The Disarmament Commission also decided to hold the 2005 substantive session during a period of three weeks in March-April 2005 and in this context requested the Bureau to present to the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly a relevant resolution proposing the above dates.

15. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted as a whole, its report to the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Annex

I. States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

A. Original proposal:

"Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament";

"Practical confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the field of conventional arms".

B. Alternative proposal:

"Guidelines for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects";

"Verification mechanisms and instruments of international treaties and agreements, to which Member States are parties, in the field of disarmament".

II. European Union

"Enhancing the verification mechanisms and instruments of the international system of treaties and agreements against the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery";

"Best practices and regional approaches to illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons".

III. United States of America

A. Proposals circulated at the United Nations Disarmament Commission preparatory meeting on 5 March:

The Disarmament Commission decides, for 2004 only, to postpone the implementation of General Assembly resolution 58/67, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission";

The Disarmament Commission further decides to convene from 5-16 April 2004 to consider ways and methods for revitalizing the work of the Disarmament Commission, and report appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth Session;

The Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, in consultation with the Bureau, will communicate these decisions in writing to the President of the General Assembly.

B. Proposals circulated on 26 March:

"Strategies against illicit weapons of mass destruction trafficking";

"Methodologies for verifying conventional arms control agreements";

"Measures for improving the effectiveness of the UN disarmament machinery".

C. **Proposals circulated on 6 April:**

"Strategies for dealing with illicit activities that undermine nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives";

"Problems in compliance with existing conventional disarmament measures, to which Member States are parties, and approaches to improving compliance";

"Measures for improving the effectiveness of the UN disarmament machinery".

D. **Proposed amendments to Chairman's 12 April paper tabled on 19 April:**

Strategies [guidelines] for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons [in all its aspects], including [in particular] strategies for dealing with illicit activities that undermine nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation activities;

Elements for verification mechanisms and instruments of conventional arms agreements;

Measures for improving the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery, without prejudice to efforts within the framework of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

IV. Chairman's proposal

"Guidelines for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, including, in particular, strategies for dealing with illicit activities that undermine nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives";

"Elements for verification mechanisms and instruments of conventional arms agreements";

"Measures for improving the effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery, without prejudice to efforts within the framework of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament".

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